

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 140815Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3984

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4045

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO MERGE UMNO AND USNO ENDORSED BY TUNKU

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4002

1. ACCORDING TO DAILY "STAR" OF JULY 14, FORMER PREMIER AND UMNO PRESIDENT TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN WILL MEET WITH A DELEGATION FROM THE UNITED SABAH NATIONAL PARTY (USNO) JULY 15 WHO WILL BRIEF HIM ON THEIR PROPOSAL THAT THE TWO PARTIES MERGE. TUNKU WAS QUOTED AS ENDORSING THE MERGER AS WAS THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UMNO YOUTH, TAN SRI SYED JAAFAR ALBAR. FORMER AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON THIR JOHARI REPORTEDLY ALSO FAVORED THE MOVE BUT NOTED THAT DIFFICULTIES MIGHT ARISE BECAUSE UMNO MEMBERSHIP IS LIMITED TO MALAYS AND MUSLIMS WHILE USNO PERMITS NON-MALAY, NON-MALAY,NNON-MUSLIM BUMIPUTRAS (E.G. KADAZANS, MURUTS) TO BECOME MEMBERS.

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2. IN A PARALLEL MOVE, USNO PRESIDENT TUN DATU

Haji Mustapha, who
is also president of the United Sabah Islamic
Association (USIA), obtained agreement from a USIA
extra ordinary general meeting July
13 for USIA to merge with the Malaysian Muslim Welfare
Association (PERKIM) which is headed
by the Tunku.

3. COMMENT: THE TUNKU IS CHAIRMAN OF THE STAR
WHILE MUSTAPHA IS ITS PRINCIPAL BACKER, THEREFORE WE CAN
ASSUME ITS THE REPORTS ACCURATELY CONVEY
THE ATTITUDE AND INTENTIONS OF THESE TWO FIGURES.
IF UMNO WERE TO GO ALONG WITH THIS PROPOSAL IT WOULD RESCUE TUN
MUSTAPHA FROM HIS CURRENT POLITICAL OBLIVION AND GIVE
HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK TO RESTORE HIS FORMER POWER
IN SABAH AND IN MALAYSIA AS A WHOLE. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL,
HOWEVER, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE UMNO SUPREME
COUNCIL WILL AGREE TO THE MERGER SO LONG
AS IT IS CONTROLLED BY PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN. (UMNO
VICE PRESIDENT GHAFAR BABA WAS QUOTED AS STATING THAT A FORMAL
APPLICATION HAD NOT YET BEEN LODGED THEREFORE THE PROPOSAL
HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY CONSIDERED.)
UNDERHILL

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